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September 17, 1999

Jane Henney  
Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration  
Fax # (301) 827-6870

Dear Ms. Henney:

As a family physician, a mother, and a consumer of US meat products, I object to the use of antibiotics in animal feed.

Antibiotics are powerful and lifesaving medicines, but they have a limited life. There is every reason to be concerned that the number of antibiotics that will ever be developed is limited. Many thoughtful and concerned scientists and physicians speculate on the possibilities and implications of a "post antibiotic era". In addition, I see reports of antibiotic allergies in children at their first therapeutic exposure to a specific antibiotic. The presumption is that these children developed allergies as a result of antibiotic residues in the foods they consumed. Both of these concerns are potentially life-threatening to individuals.

I think it is irresponsible to use these valuable and precious antibiotics on a routine basis in feed for healthy animals. This use is wasteful and increases antibiotic resistance among the organisms that infect humans and exposes humans to the possibility of developing life-threatening allergic reactions.

I am a member of Working Assets, and so the timing of this letter corresponds to their call to action. However, this is a topic that has concerned me for a very long time. I just needed to know who to write.

I ask you to use your authority to place a ban on the use of all antibiotics in animal feed, whether that antibiotic is used in humans or not.

I was dissappointed that your agency chose to require citizens who expressed concern over this issue to write or fax their concerns. This is simply another barrier to a participatory government.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Allemann, MD

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